

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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CHRISTMAS AID FOR HOKKAIDO SUFFERERS

"Farmers in Hokkaido have been suffering from severe cold weather during the past three or four years, but the present situation is the worst of all," reports Associate Director Kentaro Buma of Japan Church World Service, who recently visited the island in order to plan further aid to the stricken areas. Riots would have occurred in the Kushiro region, according to Mr. Chuji Ichikawa, a local government official; if the gifts of rice from Church World Service had not been received. Many students are suffering from malnutrition and skin diseases are prevalent among the children. Only a small fraction of the children bring any lunches to schools and these consist entirely of pumpkin and potatoes. To alleviate the situation additional relief goods are being shipped and special Christmas gifts will be distributed through the churches.

SHIMANE PREFECTURAL COUNCIL ORGANIZED

Representatives of thirty-two churches in Shimane prefecture recently met at the Matsue Christian Church and organized a Shimane Prefecture Christian Council. The Reverend S. Shimada of the Episcopal Church was elected chairman of the executive committee and the Rev. Y. Takemura of the Lutheran Matsue Preaching Center recording secretary. There are now 38 prefectural council affiliated with the National Christian Council.

HEPBURN SCHOLAR RETURNS

Professor Michio Takaya of Meiji Gakuin University recently returned from a four months trip to the United States where he collected materials for a new history of Protestant Christianity. The many manuscripts in libraries and denominational headquarters, which were microfilmed, will provide much information which is said to be entirely new to the Japanese.

EVANGELISM IN OKINAWA

"Every denomination in Okinawa is actively engaged in evangelism," says the Reverend Tsunetaro Miyakoda, General Secretary of the Japan Bible Society, who recently returned from a meeting of the Bible Society Committee in the islands. "The Spirit of Jesus (Iesu no Mitama) Church, which now has a membership of 3,000, has developed remarkably," he continued, "The day I attended a service eighteen persons were baptized and I was told that there are baptisms every Sunday." The land problem is not as explosive as previously, but interest in emigration has greatly increased, according to Mr. Miyakoda.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS DISCUSSED

The Social Problems Committee of the United Church of Christ in Japan held its first meeting since the General Assembly at Hayama, November 29-30. The principal subjects on the agenda were relief for Hokkaido, human rights in Okinawa, and aid for atomic victims. In regard to the atomic victims, representatives from Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the General Assembly urged support of a bill to be presented to the Diet to aid the atomic victims. Moreover, the Christian Peace Society sponsored meetings at the Fujimicho (November 23) and the Shinano-machi (November 24) churches at which delegates reported on the actual state of the victims. Considerable difference of opinion exists as to the actual number of sufferers. The Kirisuto Tsushin (Christian News Service) states that the total is about two hundred eighty thousand in both cities, fifty-thousand of whom are said to require some attention and ten thousand are in need of immediate treatment. The Reverend Kazuo Nomoto is chairman of the Social Problems Committee.

SPECIAL PUBLIC BATH FOR PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

After two years of special effort, Miss Kazue Hayama, minister of the Mitake Church in Shibuya, Tokyo, has been successful in building a special public bath for physically handicapped persons at a cost of three million yen (\$8,000). Miss Hayama, the child of a former colonel of the Japanese army, was stricken with diphtheria as a child of fourteen and lost her right arm and leg. Urged by her father on his death bed to become a Christian, she was baptized and later became a minister. Ever conscious of the difficulties of other physically handicapped persons at public baths she determined to provide a separate one for them.

TEACHERS UNIONS IN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Representatives of sixty-nine Christian schools affiliated with the Education Association of Christian Schools, meeting in Hayama November 13-14 were urged by some educators to seek for the organization of Christian Unions rather than unions formed in accordance with the Labor Standards Law. The drafting of regulations for such unions was referred to the association's officers and staff.

CHRISTMAS PREPARATIONS FOR AMAMI ISLAND CHURCHES

In order to assist the Christian movement in the Amami Islands the United Church of Christ in Japan is planning to take a special Christmas offering among churches and Sunday schools. The financial difficulties of the islanders are such that even repairs on their church buildings are difficult. The Reverend Jiro Fukui, former chairman of the Kyushu District, is presently ministering to the needs of the islanders.

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORKERS HONORED

Miss Annie Powlas of the United Lutheran Church was one of the six Christian social workers recently honored in the presence of the Emperor and Empress at a ceremony sponsored by the National Convention of Social Workers at Hibiya Public Hall in Tokyo.

CHRISTIAN STUDY CENTER CONFERENCE IN MADRAS

The Reverend Kiyoshi Hirai, General Secretary of the National Christian Council, will attend a conference in Madras, India, April 3, 1957 of representatives concerned with the establishment of Christian Study Centers

IN BRIEF

The Reverend Kozo Kashiwai of the United Church of Christ in Japan recently spent a week in Okinawa discussing plans for theological education for ministers in Okinawa.

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Thirty Christian leaders in the field religious education recently met at the Hoshino Hotsprings near Karuizawa to plan a new comprehensive curriculum to be inaugurated in 1959 in connection with the 14th World Convension on Christian Education.

Yours truly,
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Investigation on Christian Education

SOCIAL WORKERS

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